

sembles the larger Otter in dentition, colour, and shape, but is of more slender structure, and possesses marked differences in the proportion of the coronoid bone. He has, besides, distinct habits and modes of life, especially in his search for sustenance, which, I think, altogether entitles us to consider him as specifically distinct from the *Lutra canadensis*."

*On two Forms of Anthriscus sylvestris.*

By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S.

On the banks of the Thames, between Kew and Richmond, there are now to be seen growing in abundance, side by side, so close together that their leaves are often to be seen intermixed, two very distinct forms of *Anthriscus sylvestris*: at least, I consider they are both that plant, as I cannot find any character in the flower, the fruit, or the leaves by which I can separate them.

One is a large succulent plant, of a bright, rather palish green colour, much branched, and with large broad leaves; the stem is thick, and has a few large ridges, and the flowers are rather large. The other is a slender rigid-stemmed plant, with comparatively few and distant branches, and comparatively few and smaller leaves. The stem has many small, subequal ridges. The stem and foliage are always dark, and generally of a more or less purple shade; but I have seen a few plants in which the stem and leaves were dark green.

These differences cannot arise from soil or any difference of external circumstances, such as situation, exposure, &c., as they grow side by side, and come into flower at the same time.

I have observed a similar fact, but one not so strongly marked, of two forms growing side by side and flowering at the same period, in the Wood-Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), which I described a short time ago.

Now, I wish some of your readers would explain to me, by any of the modern or ancient theories of the origin of species, what we are to learn from the existence of two forms of the same species in the same locality, under the same circumstances, and occurring at the same time. They cannot be regarded as varieties produced by soil or external circumstances, or any of the other conditions that are supposed to cause variation in species; and yet they are not species as we commonly regard species, though, if such specimens were collected in a foreign country, and only examined from the specimen in an herbarium, one might be inclined to regard them as allied species or very distinct varieties.

I do not find the two forms of this plant noticed in any of the English works on botany, nor in any of the floras of France or Germany that occur to me.

Indeed, what a wonderful thing it is to consider how plants of the same kind flower at the same period! how one week the banks of the railways are covered with one, and then with another kind, all the plants of each in bloom at once, and that the different species follow one after the other in the same succession year after year—varying,

it is true, as the season is late or early, but yet each retaining its general place in the succession, and each appearing at the same time.

The banks of the railway-cuttings, which some condemn as being ugly, are the flower-gardens that gladden the eyes, especially in early spring, of thousands who have been pent up in the smoke of London for months. When first the golden coltsfoot spangles the banks, I can scarcely resist the desire to be moving along the lines. These flowers come and go in a day, almost as if by magic. They are followed, at least near London, by the lilac lady-smock; then come the cowslips, and in the copses which are often to be seen at the bottom of the banks, and in the hedges by the field-sides, the primrose and the wood-anemone, and, more obscure, but easily seen by sharp eyes, the wood-sorrel; and the hyacinth forms a blue carpet in the distance, and the beautiful golden broom and furze on the bank itself. Then come the large white beds of the wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*); and these are followed by the ox-eye daisy, all nearly of the same height, and each turning its little star-flower towards the great luminary as the world moves. The plants of the same kind being all nearly of the same height add much to the beauty of their appearance. This is especially seen in the fields of clover, which form a purple carpet; but I was especially struck with it in an alpine meadow that was just about to be cut down near the hospital on the Via Mala: there the flowers showed four beautifully even carpets, each to be seen through the other. Just above the pale green herbage, chiefly composed of the alpine dandelion, came the purple gentian, then the blue *Phyteuma*, and above all was the beautiful golden *Trollius*, or globe-flower. It was a sight never to be forgotten.

*Planorbis crista.*

*To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,—Will you permit me to withdraw that portion of my letter in your last Number which states that I followed M. Moquin-Tandon in adopting the Linnean name *Planorbis crista*? Having adopted it, as any reader of my book may see, in opposition to the views of that author, it only remains for me to apologize to you for my carelessness in making the statement.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

May 1, 1863.

LOVELL REEVE.

*On the Occurrence of Lymnæa stagnalis in Scotland.*

By ROBERT O. CUNNINGHAM, Esq., Prestonpans.

Mr. Lovell Reeve, in his recently published valuable work on the Land and Freshwater Mollusks of Great Britain, says, with respect to *Lymnæa stagnalis*, "This fine species stands alone among the Lymnæacea of the Eastern hemisphere for the conspicuous prominence of its size. In the Western hemisphere it is represented in a remarkable degree of parallelism by the *Lymnæa jugularis* of